



# Hounslow Youth Service Report

Hounslow Children's Services Authority Area

---

**Better  
education  
and care**

Publication Type	Published	Reference no.
All	14 August 2006	313

---

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the local authority or at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Part A: Summary of the report</b>	
Main findings	2
<b>Part B: The Youth Service's contribution to Every Child Matters outcomes</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Part C: Commentary on the Key Aspects</b>	
Key Aspect 1: Standards of young people's achievements and the quality of youth work practice	4
Key Aspect 2: Quality of curriculum and resources	6
Key Aspect 3: Leadership and management	7

## Introduction

1. Hounslow Youth Service operates from four youth centres. Two are managed by trustees of voluntary organisations in conjunction with the youth service, one centre is being re-built as part of a Sure Start initiative and one is owned and managed by the local authority. In addition, provision is made through issues-based projects, residential work, a comprehensive programme of summer activities and a significant amount of school-based activity organised in conjunction with the Connexions service. There are five senior managers in the youth service, 39 full-time and 54 part-time youth workers which equates to a full-time equivalent of 51.4 youth workers. Included in these figures is a team of personal advisers who provide information, guidance, support and positive activities for young people. The Youth Service is based in the Young People and Community Learning division of the Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Department. The Council spends less on its youth service than its statistical neighbours and the England average. Over 15% Of the 13-19 population in Hounslow attend youth service sessions more than four times each month.

2. The joint area review was enhanced to enable coverage of the youth service in Hounslow. Inspectors considered the youth service's self assessment report and met with a cross section of staff both within the youth service and the council. Inspectors reviewed key service documentation and carried direct observation of a small sample of youth work sessions in the two neighbourhood study areas as well as other observations of practice across the borough.

## Part A: Summary of the report

### Main findings

#### Effectiveness and value for money

3. Hounslow has a good youth service which provides good value for money. Young people, across a broad range of settings and activities, achieve well and make good progress, particularly in the development of their communication skills and their personal and social development. The quality of youth work practice is good. Youth workers have a very good understanding of their local areas and the needs and circumstances of the young people they are working with. Opportunities for young people to gain some form of accreditation are limited to a small number of projects or involvement in the well-established and successful Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The service has developed a number of innovative approaches to the recruitment of youth workers. There is a growing recognition at council level of the strategic importance of the youth service in meeting the five outcomes of Every Child Matters (ECM). Arrangements for quality assurance and performance management within the service are under-developed.

## Strengths

- The quality of youth work practice.
- Innovative approaches to the recruitment of youth workers.
- An impressive range of youth programmes and activities on offer to young people.
- Youth workers have a very good understanding of their local areas and the needs and circumstances of the young people they are working with.
- The service attracts and retains a high proportion of older teenagers and young people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The well-established and successful Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme involves every school in the borough and involves over 1200 participants each year.

## Areas for development

- Opportunities to accredit the work and progress of young people are limited.
- Links between the youth service and voluntary and community groups in Hounslow are under-developed.
- There is a lack of suitable buildings for use by young people across the borough.
- Arrangements for quality assurance and performance management are under-developed.
- Information and support services provided by the Connexions service for young people attending youth centres and projects are limited.

## Key aspect inspection grades

Key aspect		Grade
1	Standards of young people's achievement	3
	Quality of youth work practice	3
2	Quality of curriculum and resources	3
3	Strategic and operational leadership and management	3

The table above shows overall grades about provision. Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale:

**Grade 4:** A service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users:

**Grade 3:** A service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users:

**Grade 2:** A service that delivers only minimum requirements for users:

**Grade 1:** A service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users.

## Part B: The youth service's contribution to Every Child Matters outcomes

4. The service makes an effective contribution in a number of areas. The revised curriculum framework has been cross-referenced with the five ECM outcomes. For example, three topics in the framework relate to 'being healthy' and projects relating to aspects of health education include the Sickle Cell Awareness workshop. The service is a key partner in supporting the borough strategy for sexual health. Similarly, there are a number of projects and activities, based on the theme of 'staying safe', including a project on domestic violence. The service conducts risk assessments for the extensive programme of visits and summer activities to ensure the safety of young people taking part in them. The Youth Service has a lead responsibility for managing a large-scale Positive Activities Programme and for developing a borough-wide participation strategy. Young people are able to influence the content and nature of the activities in the clubs and projects they attend. Elected members and senior managers attend youth council meetings from time-to-time to gather the views of young people on a range of different topics.

## Part C: Commentary on the key aspects

### Key Aspect 1: Standards of young people's achievements and the quality of youth work practice

5. The standard of young people's achievement is good, particularly in the creative arts. Young people attending AWAAZ, a drama project, were highly motivated and strongly committed to the project and supported each other through positive team work. The young people explained how the project had helped them to raise their self-confidence and develop a positive self-image which helped them to cope with other aspects of their lives. A group of young women

attending 'What's Out There', a project for looked after young people, were engaged in a task which developed their decision-making skills and used their ideas and gaps in knowledge to understand issues relating to puberty, sex and relationships. There was much fun and laughter in the group and the young people were able to explain, with great confidence, how this project had helped them to feel more valued members of their local community.

6. Young people attending Alluminae, a street dance project, were able to explain their areas of learning and the progress that they had made whilst attending the project both in terms of technical and social skills. They enjoyed the challenging work and they were actively involved in planning future performances and shows.

7. The service provides many opportunities for young people to celebrate their progress and achievements through public events and performances held in local areas and across the borough. For example, the annual awards ceremony held at a hotel close to London Heathrow airport was attended by over 300 young people and their families, and provided an excellent opportunity for young people from clubs and projects to come together and celebrate their achievements through performances, music, dancing and poetry. CD-ROMs are used widely to record the experiences and involvement of young people in particular activities including residential and overseas trips. Opportunities for young people to gain some form of regional or nationally-recognised accreditation based on their involvement in youth service activities are very limited, and only available through a small number of projects or the well-established and successful Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

8. The Service attracts and retains a high proportion of older teenagers and young people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

9. The quality of youth work practice is good. Most sessions were well planned. Youth workers have a very good understanding of their local areas and the needs and circumstances of the young people they were work with. There is a strong sense of community involvement in the local areas with a number of different agencies and organisations coming together to share resources (such as staffing and equipment) to support particular projects. Relationships between youth workers and young people are particularly good. There are no examples of youth workers having to deal with inappropriate language or unacceptable behaviour. Specialist youth workers are used well to complement the skills of youth workers. For example two specialist workers from Hackney Primary Care Trust led a group at the Attic project on the topic of sexual health and were provided with effective support in managing the session by the local full-time youth worker. A number of sessions concentrated on sporting and recreational activities, particularly football. The young people enjoyed the sessions but there was little in terms of planned skill development.

10. A strong sense of fun and enjoyment across a broad range of programmes is a feature of the service with youth workers providing effective informal guidance and support to young people. Information and support services provided by the Connexions service for young people attending youth centres and projects are limited.

## Key Aspect 2: Quality of curriculum and resources

11. The quality of curriculum and resources is good. The service provides a broad range of provision through issue-based projects, detached and outreach work, residential and a comprehensive programme of summer activities. The well-established and successful Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme provides an example of good practice. The Scheme attracts young people from a broad range of backgrounds, with every school taking part, including special schools: there are over 1200 participants each year. There is a limited amount of building-based activity due, primarily, to the lack of suitable buildings for use by young people. A draft Community Buildings strategy forms the basis of partnerships with housing associations and other community groups for the shared use of buildings.

12. The service makes good use of, and relies heavily on, external funding to develop its curriculum offer. This, however, creates a degree of uncertainty with a significant number of posts based on short-term contracts. For example, the team of five full-time detached and outreach workers are all employed on temporary contracts. In the absence of a borough-wide needs analysis, the existing range and type of provision on offer, whilst satisfactory, is based on developments over time and the availability of external funding to support specific localities, issues or groups of individuals.

13. The introduction of a new curriculum framework, which is cross-referenced to the five ECM outcomes, is being monitored well through the regular review of session recording sheets and discussions with staff at their supervision sessions.

14. The service has taken positive action to recruit both full-time and part-time youth workers. A joint scheme organised in conjunction with Hounslow Housing has resulted in a significant number of residents from local housing estates joining the Introduction to Youth Work course organised by the youth service. Over half of the current team of full-time youth workers started their careers as volunteers or part-time youth workers the percentage of staff from black and minority ethnic backgrounds is impressive (43% of full-time and 46% of part-time staff). Over 80% of staff holds a recognised professional qualification, and 57% of full-time staff are JNC qualified. None of the team of five detached and outreach workers are qualified. Opportunities for staff to engage in staff development courses are good.



## Key Aspect 3: Leadership and management

15. Strategic and operational leadership and management are good. The youth service is growing in size and in its confidence to provide a quality service for young people. A significant increase in its core budget has aided this process and there is a growing recognition, at council level, of the strategic importance of the service in helping to meet the five ECM outcomes. The Principal Youth Officer is a member of key strategic groups including the Children's and Young People's Co-ordination group. Effective partnership arrangements are in place, with a broad range of statutory groups and organisations including the Connexions service, but links with local community and voluntary organisations, in terms of strategic planning, are under-developed. Arrangements for allocating funds for community based youth projects through the council's Community Development and Regeneration Team does not allow the youth service to have any real influence on the nature and type of community-based projects and initiatives on offer in the local areas.

16. Arrangements for quality assurance and performance management within the service are under-developed. However, senior and area managers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. Communications across the service are good. There is a regular cycle of staff and planning meetings. A significant number of staff are based at the headquarters in Feltham. This allows for regular contact between staff and is helping to develop a sense of co-operation and joint working.

17. There are clearly stated policies for child protection and well-established procedure for dealing with racial incidents. All staff are expected to attend mandatory diversity and equalities training. There is a policy and development plan based on the requirements of the Special Educational Needs Disability Act, which is being implemented with support and funding through the Transforming Youth Work initiative: good progress is being made in meeting the targets set in the plan.

18. The findings of a council scrutiny panel (2004) were influential in the youth service receiving an increase of £300,000 in its core budget for 2005/06. However, the council still spends less than its statistical neighbours on the youth service and is well below the national average for youth services in England. Financial monitoring of the income and expenditure is satisfactory. The service does not measure its cost effectiveness on a regular basis.